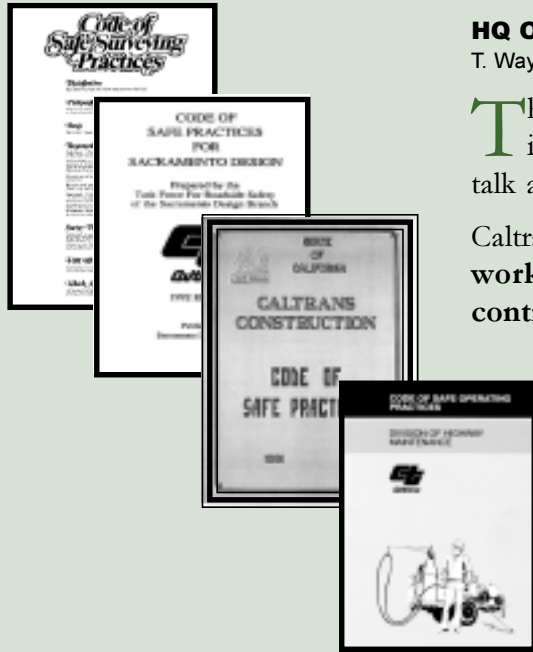


SAFER DAYS

& HEALTHIER WAYS



CODE OF SAFE WORK PRACTICES CAN WE GET ONE?



HQ Office of Safety and Health

T. Wayne Brazelton

There have been a number of questions regarding the Code of Safe Work Practices lately. Let's talk a little about them.

Caltrans policy states "Supervisors shall review all work activities and operations to identify and control potential physical and/or environmental hazards and evaluate the need to develop Codes of Safe Work Practices".

Field Operations; such as Maintenance, Construction, Surveys, Structures, and Equipment have written codes of safe work practices. You may have seen one called Code of Safe Operating Practices, or Code of Safe Surveying Practices. But what if you don't have a Code of Safe Practices in your department, or for a specific job? No problem... Make one!

continued on page 4

A safety and health publication prepared by the California Department Of Transportation, Office of Safety and Health P.O. Box 168037 Mail station 13 Sacramento, California 95816

THE SAFETY NEWSLETTER IS BACK!

HQ Office of Safety and Health

T. Wayne Brazelton

Joe Curtis, Chief of the Office of Safety and Health, made the decision to start the newsletter once again. The Safety Line was discontinued in 1994 because of financial reasons. The purpose of the newsletter is to provide information to Caltrans

employees about safety and health issues affecting the Department.

continued on page 2



In this issue

The newsletter is back	1
Codes of Safe Practices	1
The SILENT killer	2
Sun safety campaign	3
Winter driving	3

The revised newsletter, SAFER DAYS and HEALTHIER WAYS, will have a new name and look, but will be modeled after the old SAFETY LINE, shown above.

**Issue #1
Winter
2000**

Headquarters Office of Safety and Health



High Blood Pressure...the SILENT Killer

When an 18-wheeler cuts you off in traffic, you know your blood pressure goes up. You can literally feel it. But what about now, as you're quietly reading? High blood pressure or hypertension is especially dangerous because most of the time it has no symptoms.

Hypertension can go undetected for years, damaging your tissues and vital organs. It's one of the leading causes of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and premature death, and is the number one killer of Americans...both men and women. An estimated 50 million people have hypertension, meaning their blood pressure is consistently above 130/85 mm Hg. Of that 50 million, an estimated 17.5 million don't even know they have it. That's why regular blood pressure check-ups are so important.

Your blood pressure is the force exerted by your heart and arteries to keep blood flowing through your body. Your blood pressure is high when that force is excessive. This excess force makes your heart work harder than it should to pump blood to distant tissues and organs. If this pressure isn't controlled, your heart enlarges and your arteries become scarred, hardened, and less elastic. Eventually, your overworked heart and stiff arteries may not be able to pump blood properly, which can lead to congestive heart failure. Damage to your arteries can trigger stroke, kidney disease, vision loss, and shrinkage of the brain, which can cause memory loss and damage to thinking processes.

Your best defense against hypertension is prevention. You can take responsibility for your own health and well-being by increasing your personal awareness of risk factors, and then taking appropriate steps to minimize them. Here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ Exercise regularly
- ✓ Lose excess weight
- ✓ Limit alcohol
- ✓ Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- ✓ Hold the salt
- ✓ STOP smoking
- ✓ Learn to control stress

Contact Gail Schifsky at 916-227-2648 for more information.

Do you take time to discuss safety issues?

The General Industry Safety Orders requires the employer to communicate with employees on matters relating to occupational safety and health. To do this, Caltrans has a policy that supervisors in office related work locations shall schedule, conduct, and document safety meetings with their employees at least quarterly.

For field related work activities, the Construction Safety Orders and Caltrans policy require supervisors to conduct "toolbox" or "tailgate" safety meetings with their crews at least every 10 working days to emphasize safety.

For more information on scheduling, conducting, and documenting safety meetings, refer to chapter 2 of the Caltrans Safety Manual.

THE NEWSLETTER

continued from page 1

My goal as editor is to provide an avenue for all employees to share their experiences with others, and have their safety and health related questions answered. If you would like to write an article about a close call, an interesting idea, healthy tips, etc...or ask a question, please contact me. (see page 4) Also, your ideas on how to make the newsletter better are always welcome.

Sun Safety



Coming Soon

HQ Office of Safety and Health

Charles Wheeler

The sun produces ultraviolet rays, a known cause of sunburn, premature aging of the skin, cataracts, a weakened immune system, and sadly, **skin cancer**. There is no such thing as a “healthy tan”. The Caltrans Office of Safety and Health in cooperation with the Department of Health Services (DHS) has produced a video on sun safety for outdoor workers. This video, together with 250 sun safety kits provided by DHS, containing valuable information, posters, and other items will be arriving in the field early this spring. Please look for them and share the information with all employees. Sun safety begins at home with our children and must remain a diligent lifelong practice.

Winter Driving

Winter driving on roads and highways in the snowcapped mountains of California can be a pleasant adventure or it can be frustrating, tiring and sometimes even hazardous. Caltrans Maintenance provides the following information to help make your mountain driving safe and pleasant.

Before Heading for Snow Country

- ◆ Make sure your brakes, windshield wipers, defroster, heater and exhaust system are in top condition.
- ◆ Check your antifreeze and be ready for colder temperatures. You may want to add special solvent to your windshield washer reservoir to prevent icing.
- ◆ Check your tires. Make sure they are properly inflated and the tread is in good condition.
- ◆ Always carry chains. Make sure they are the proper size for your tires and are in working order. You might also want to take along a flashlight and chain repair links. Chains must be installed on the drive wheels. Make sure you know if your vehicle is front or rear wheel drive.
- ◆ Other suggested items to carry in your car are an ice scraper or commercial de-icer, a broom for brushing snow off your car, a shovel to free your car if it’s “snowed in”, sand or burlap for traction if your wheels should become mired in snow and an old towel to clean your hands.
- ◆ It is also a good idea to take along water, food, warm blankets and extra clothing. A lengthy delay will make you glad you have them.
- ◆ Put an extra car key in your pocket. A number of motorists have locked themselves out of their cars when putting on chains and at ski areas.

continued on page 4

February is Heart Month.
March is Nutrition Month.
Watch for presentations offered by
your District or HQ Office of Safety
and Health.

The Caltrans Safety Manual is now online. Access it on the world wide web at:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/opo/safety/>
Access it on the Caltrans intranet at:
<http://adsc.dot.ca.gov/OPO/HEALTHSAFETY/Safety/safety.htm>

CAN WE GET ONE

continued from page 1

Chapter 11 in the Caltrans Safety Manual includes guidelines for developing and writing Codes of Safe Work Practices. It will lead you through the process.

First, list the potential hazards, both physical and environmental, associated with this job or activity. Brainstorm to get a complete list of these hazards. Next, list all precautions to take and procedures to use to reduce the chances of injury or illness. Use these new Codes of Safe Practices to train employees, and again later to remind them of the hazards present, and how to work safely in and around those hazards.

Codes of Safe Practices are a great source of safety meeting topics. Share them with others in your area or district to allow everyone to benefit.

There are some samples in Chapter 11 that may apply to work activities you may be doing, and you can use them as “templates” for creating your own. Don’t forget to use the entire staff when writing these, after all, they know what the hazards are!

WINTER DRIVING

continued from page 3

Driving Tips

- ◆ Allow enough time. Trips to the mountains can take longer during winter than other times of year, especially if you encounter storm conditions or icy roads. Get an early start and allow plenty of time to reach your destination.
- ◆ Keep your gas tank full. It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a bad storm or you may be caught in a traffic delay.
- ◆ Keep windshield and windows clear. You may want to stop at a safe turnout to use a snow brush or scraper. Use the car defroster and a clean cloth to keep the windows free of fog.
- ◆ Slow down. A highway speed of 55 miles per hour may be safe in dry weather but an invitation for trouble on snow and ice. Snow and ice make stopping distances much longer, so keep your seat belt buckled and leave more distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. Bridge decks and shady spots can be icy when other areas are not. Remember to avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes.
- ◆ Be more observant. Visibility is often limited in winter by weather conditions. Slow down and watch for other vehicles and for snow equipment. Even though snow removal vehicles have flashing lights, visibility may be so restricted during a storm that it is difficult to see the slow moving equipment.
- ◆ When stalled, stay with your vehicle and try to conserve fuel while maintaining warmth. Be alert to any possible exhaust or monoxide problems.

For up-to-the-minute road conditions, call the Caltrans Highway Information Network at 1-800-427-7623 (ROAD).

DID YOU KNOW?

If an injury results from the serious and willful misconduct of the employee, his or her workers' compensation benefits MUST be reduced by one half. Hmmm

SAFER DAYS

& HEALTHIER WAYS



Headquarters Office of Safety and Health

JOSEPH C. CURTIS, Chief

T. WAYNE BRAZELTON, Editor

Comments, suggestions, and articles should be sent to the editor, T. Wayne Brazelton at this office, or via e-mail to t.wayne.brazelton@dot.ca.gov, or by telephone at 916-227-2645 CALNET 498-2645.